

**Town of Arlington  
Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC)**

Wednesday, August 21, 2002 7:15 PM

Committee members present: Rich Bento, Elisabeth Carr-Jones, Ralph Elwell, Larry Englisher, Lt. Jim McHugh, Mike Rademacher, Scott Smith, Ed Starr, David Walkinshaw

Others present: Paul Connor, Mark Miller

**Administrative Items**

The minutes of 6/11 and 6/17 were approved.

The following members have visited the Town Clerk's office and been sworn in, either for this committee specifically or for another committee: Elisabeth Carr-Jones, Ralph Elwell, Larry Englisher, Mike Rademacher, Scott Smith, Ed Starr, David Walkinshaw

**Jason / Brantwood**

Rich Bento arrived during this discussion, at 7:30.

David Walkinshaw reported for the working group. Findings included the following:

- Speeds for the most part were within the speed limit. However, given the curves in the road, 25 mph appears to be fast to someone standing near the street
- Traffic volumes were higher than typical for a local street (334 cars / hour on upper Jason during the morning peak), but not so high so as to impose unreasonable delays on pedestrians wishing to cross.

The working group does not recommend posting Do Not Enter signs on Jason.

*Spring / Jason / Pleasant View Intersection*

The following recommendations were proposed:

1. Stop sign at the corner of Spring St at the Concord Turnpike entrance, along with removal of brush that blocks sightlines.
2. Yellow line in middle of Concord Turnpike entrance to Spring Street
3. Crosswalk across Spring Street, near school bus stop, with appropriate pedestrian warning signs
4. Yellow center lines at the bottom of Jason and Pleasant View
5. Yellow center lines on Spring between Jason and the Concord Turnpike entrance
6. Stop signs at the bottom of Jason and Pleasant View

After some discussion, recommendations 3 – 6 were approved unanimously, with recommendations 1 and 2 being deferred to the Concord Turnpike/Spring Street agenda item.

Points in the discussion included the following:

- Advance warning signs will be needed for the crosswalk, particularly for traffic turning right from Jason Street. The crosswalk might be more visible if it were closer to Jason. Rich Bento noted that the crosswalk needs to avoid existing driveways, and should cross the street at a 90-degree angle.
- The geometry of this intersection is similar to the Rindge / Cedar / Rice intersection in

- North Cambridge. This intersection was recently rebuilt with curb extensions.
- Should we add crosswalks on Jason and Pleasant View? This was deferred as a possible future tuning of the intersection.
  - Do the yellow centerlines say “this is a main road” or do they channel traffic. We agreed that the yellow lines would be extended only a short distance (about 60 ft) up their respective streets, so it is clear their purpose is to channel traffic.
  - The bush on the corner of Jason and Spring, on private property, that reduces visibility as a driver approaches the intersection was discussed. It was noted that Town Bylaws allow a request for offending foliage to be trimmed. No action was taken at this time.

### *Jason / Brantwood / Hillsdale*

The following recommendations were presented. David requested that they not be voted this evening:

1. Temporary speed hump at the Menotomy Rocks Park crosswalk
2. Limit direct access to upper Jason by forcing drivers to make a sharp turn at Jason / Hillsdale. Variation (B) closes the direct southbound route on Jason, forcing all drivers on upper Jason to make a sharp turn from Hillsdale. Variation (C) makes the direct southbound route on Jason one-way southbound, thus forcing northbound drivers to make a sharp left turn on Hillsdale.
3. Yellow line and stop sign on Jason Street northbound at Hillsdale
4. Stop or Yield sign on Hillsdale at intersection with Jason

Discussion items:

- Can we find a temporary speed hump that allows high enough speeds? People should be able to travel through the area at 15 mph. Rich Bento will ask Paul Campbell to investigate.
- Variation (B) could shift the majority of through traffic to Hillsdale road.

The committee was asked by the chair to individually review this intersection and the proposals for a possible vote at the next meeting.

David departed at the end of this discussion at 8:15 PM. Paul Connor and Mark Miller departed shortly thereafter.

### **Concord Turnpike / Spring Street**

Edward Starr presented traffic counts, photos and discussion topics.

- Scott Smith mentioned that a difficulty with closing the entry from Spring Street to the access road is that any traffic that enters the access road from further west is forced to stay on the access road all the way to Dow Avenue. This increases the traffic volume and hazard at access road intersections with many other Arlington streets and may increase traffic at the access road pedestrian crossing near Highland Avenue.
- Jim McHugh stated that because of the high-speed merge for traffic coming from Route 2, followed by the right turn onto Spring Street, Police Director Fred Ryan is in favor of closing the Spring Street access, especially for traffic coming from the access road.
- The crash data from the state is difficult to decipher, because it (for the most part) does not give specific locations. Arlington Police Department data shows 5 crashes in the last 10 years at the Spring Street / access road. Given the traffic volumes, this does not seem to be an exceptionally high number of crashes.

- Possible actions include removing the brush to improve visibility, reducing the Access road to 1 lane between route 60 and the merge from route 2, putting yield signs on the Access road, updating the general signage, and providing a right turn lane at the turn to Spring Street.
- The Concord Turnpike is under Mass Highways jurisdiction. Next step will be meet with Mass Highway on the safety issues. Ed Starr and Rich Bento will set up a meeting with the District 4 office.

### **Stop sign at Bellington / Fisher**

This is a cross-type uncontrolled intersection with limited visibility. Since it has seen 3 motor vehicle crashes in the past year, both the Police Department and DPW recommend placement of a stop sign at this intersection, to be posted on Fisher Road. The committee voted unanimously to support this recommendation and submit it to the BOS for the 9/9 meeting.

### **Stop sign at Cutter Hill / Richfield**

The stop sign on Cutter Hill Road was placed temporarily for six months. Jim McHugh noted that since the stop sign has been placed on Cutter Hill road, speeds have dropped, while traffic volumes increased somewhat. There have been no reports of excessive speed on Richfield. The committee voted unanimously that this stop sign installation be made permanent.

### **Long term planning**

Ed Starr presented a three-page list of possible items for next year. After some discussion, we agreed to individually review the list and come back to the next meeting with our views on which items were most important. Points in the discussion included the following:

- All the safety items are important, with particular emphasis on the Mass. Ave. corridor, since that project is underway.
- There was general agreement that alternative transportation should be encouraged, and this should be part of all of our work. Scott Smith suggested that ABAC (Arlington Bicycle Advisory Committee) should take the lead on bike path projects, with support from TAC as needed.
- Ralph Elwell pointed out that Sustainable Arlington has some interest in transportation. He also suggested we continue to push for home rule legislation on speed limits, and meanwhile, post 30 mph on all entrances into town. He offered to draft a letter for consideration at our next meeting.
- Elisabeth Carr-Jones mentioned that Walking in Arlington is preparing a survey for town day.
- Larry English suggested arranging for the MBTA to meet with us.

### **News**

Ed Starr said that Paul Campbell would be with us though December 20<sup>th</sup>. By then, we will need to get the second \$25K from the developer, in order to fund the next co-op student for next year.

Rich Bento reported that he met with Charlie Crevo to develop plans for appropriate markings at Route 16 and Mass. Ave. There are also plans to revamp street lighting town-wide with metal halide lamps. In order to deal with light pollution, these lamps will have full cutoff fixtures. Top priority will be given to the intersections of collector streets.

Jim McHugh reported that we have three traffic measurement devices available and a spare, and that we could start covering the major collectors. Ed Starr will work with Jim to develop a draft measurement plan.

### **Massachusetts Avenue Corridor**

Scott Smith reported that the next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, September 4<sup>th</sup> in the Fox Library lounge. Activities since the July 10<sup>th</sup> meeting included

- Obtaining bus stop usage data from the MBTA
- Development of a plan and recruitment of volunteers to collect pedestrian count data
- Announcing the Mass. Ave. corridor process on the Arlington e-mail list.

Possibilities for additional traffic data collection (mainly to assess any before/after changes in traffic) include Bates Road, Orvis Road, Herbert Road, and possibly Brooks Avenue (by Hardy School).

**The meeting adjourned at 10 PM.**

### **Handouts:**

Agenda packet including agenda, wish list for 2002-2003, and accident summary for the Mass. Ave. corridor (between Route 16 and 60) – from Ed Starr

Minutes from June 11 and June 17, 2002 – from Scott Smith

Jason/ Highland traffic measurements – from Ed Starr

Recommendations and diagrams for Spring / Jason / Pleasant View / Hillsdale – from David Walkinshaw

Discussion material for Concord Turnpike / Spring Street Intersection – from Ed Starr

Stop sign memo for Fisher and Bellington – from Jim McHugh

Pedestrian data collection plan and bus stop ons/offers for the Mass. Ave corridor – from Scott Smith